

Notes from:	UK Advisory Forum on Ageing 12 June 2013
Chair:	Justin Russell/Andrew Latto, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
Ministers attending:	Steve Webb, Minister of State for Pensions Norman Lamb, Minister of State for Care and Support
Members:	Daisy Cole, representing Sarah Rochira, Older People's Commissioner for Wales David Hamilton, Scottish Government Nancy Davies, representing Strategy for Older People, Welsh Assembly Ron Douglas, East of England Forum Barry Wilford, East Midlands Forum Ellen Lebethe, London Forum Norman Jemison, North East Forum Jean Gaston-Parry, South East Forum Jackie Allen, South West Forum Terry Paget, representing Anne Bailey, West Midlands Forum John Welham, Yorkshire & Humberside Forum Michael Monaghan, Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament Alan Sidaway, Scottish Older People's Assembly Phyllis Preece, National Partnership Forum for Older People, Wales Rob Blundell, Welsh Senate of Older People Mervyn Kohler, Age UK Lynne Wealleans, Beth Johnson Foundation Steve McIntosh, Carers UK Gilly Crosby, Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) Howard Lewis, representing ChangeAGENTS Network UK Limited Alan Beazley, Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) Baroness Sally Greengross, International Longevity centre – UK (ILC-UK) Raj Jogia, Kensington & Chelsea Forum for Older Residents Matthew Hibberd, representing Cllr David Rodgers OBE, Local Government Association (LGA) Alastair Thomson, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Dot Gibson, National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Laura Bennett, SENSE Tony Watts, AGENDA
Observing:	David Shalit, Chair Positive Ageing in London Jackie Germain, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) (am only) Yasmin Ghazali, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (pm only) Peter Coleing, Chair East of England Forum (Safe Warm Homes Group) Sarah Davies, Chartered Institute of Housing (Safe Warm Homes Group) Amanda Nolan, Centrica (Safe Warm Homes Group) Shaun Robinson, Foundations UK (Safe Warm Homes Group) Mark Shone, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (Safe Warm Homes Group) Christine Tate, British Gas (Safe Warm Homes Group) Rachel Wookey, Public Health England (Safe Warm Homes Group)
Officials:	Catriona MacKean, Department of Health (DH) Gary Arnold, Department of Health (DH) Philip Hayes, Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) Tim Higginson, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Pam Wynne, Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC)

Notes from:	UK Advisory Forum on Ageing 12 June 2013
Apologies:	Paul Carnie, Office of Deputy First Minister, representing Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann and Jonathan Bell Claire Keating, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland Kevan Larkin, North West Forum Agnes McGroarty, Scottish Older People's Assembly Chris Ball, The Age and Employment Network (TAEN)
Speakers:	Nigel Dotchin, Department for Transport Caroline Jacobs, Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (RICA) Andrea Nicholas-Jones, Welsh Assembly Government Gareth Baynham-Hughes, Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) Maria Wardrobe, National Energy Action (NEA)
Secretariat:	Gwen Wolf, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Ken Cooper, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
Meeting Support:	Helen Dimmock, Department for Work and Pensions John Baker, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Russell Taylor, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Gill Croft, Association of Speech-to-Text Writers (AVSTTR)

Welcome, Introductions and Update Justin Russell, DWP
<p>Justin welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new member Michael Monaghan, representing the Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament and Daisy Cole Director of Wellbeing and Empowerment in the Office of the Commissioner for Older People in Wales. Justin outlined the agenda, alerting members to the fact that it looked like being a very full day.</p> <p>Justin then introduced Barry Wilford, to say a few words about the publication "Ageing Positively" which had been provided to all members.</p> <p>Barry reminded members that he had advised a previous meeting of the East Midlands Later Life Forum conference event, and explained that this publication was a report of that event. The publication details the six key recommendations identified through discussion on the day which the East Midlands Forum are planning to promote. Barry asked members to let him know any ideas, good practice, etc. to take this work forward.</p> <p>Justin thanked Barry for this useful publication. Finally Justin suggested members take a look at the new Age Action Alliance website, and thanked Russell and all those involved for their work in developing such a great product.</p>

**Introductory Session on Mobility Scooters and associated issues
(with discussion later in the day)
Nigel Dotchin, Department for Transport**

Nigel Dotchin gave an informative presentation on the Department for Transport's Mobility Vehicles project outlining the key elements of the project as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 1st March 2012, and the progress to date. He advised the meeting it is thought that there are currently around 400,000 mobility vehicles in use, and that use is increasing steadily with sales of around 120,000 a year.

The current regulations are focused on the specification of the vehicles:

- Class 1, essentially manual wheelchairs;
- Class 2, powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters that are intended to be used on the pavement; and
- Class 3, can be used on the public highway so have faster speeds. If used on the road have to be registered with DVLA, although they are exempt from road duty taxation.

There is no reference to how the vehicles should be used, how users should behave, or to issues such as training, eyesight testing, or insurance.

Nigel outlined the questions he wanted to discuss with members later in the day, giving additional clarification where necessary:

➤ **How do we ensure proper assessments (including eyesight testing)?**

DfT are working to develop a standard assessment form for purchasers to enable them to make more informed decisions about their need for a mobility scooter and the type of vehicle to purchase. The Department has also been looking at ways to develop an eyesight test that a majority of suppliers could use effectively.

➤ **How do we promote the take up of more training?**

Correspondence from the public, MPs, and Coroners' Courts about accidents involving mobility scooters; and media coverage of such accidents often raise the issue of training. Particular areas of concern are the use of mobility scooters on the road, and when used on public transport; in some areas mobility scooters are banned from public transport due to concerns about accidents as a result of user error or because the model of scooter used is unsuitable for carriage.

Retailers may show purchasers how to use the controls, etc. and provide information on any local training scheme, but these schemes are not available in all localities, and there is no national training standard.

➤ **How do we promote take up of insurance cover?**

DfT, retailers, and other organisations encourage purchasers of mobility scooters to take out insurance, and there is specialist insurance available. Police forces are now required to record accident data for mobility scooters, and, as further evidence becomes available insurance premiums may change. Home insurance is very unlikely to include mobility scooters. Mobility scooter users could end up in court if they are involved in an accident.

➤ **How do we get DfT's Guidance out to a wider audience?**

The DfT website includes guidance for mobility scooter purchasers, and links to useful material produced by other organisations, such as mobility centres and training organisations.

There is also a database on the sort of mobility scooters currently available which includes information on size and manoeuvrability.

Users need to be aware that there are sections of the Highway Code that are applicable to them.

➤ **How do we tackle the second hand market?**

This is a difficult area; it is easy to buy second hand mobility scooters on eBay, from personal advertisements, car sales and other similar locations. The information on training, insurance, etc. provided by recognised retailers is unlikely to be available to these purchasers.

➤ **How do we improve the safety design of mobility vehicles?**

All models sold have to comply with EU regulations and requirements, and reputable dealers often provide a warranty and basic maintenance advice, etc. but how do you make sure people look after them?

There will be more information this afternoon on recent research into the design of mobility scooters, but briefly there are issues over stability, weight and the hand controls. The method of braking and accelerating, for instance, is not intuitive for a majority of users.

The weight limit for powered wheelchairs is likely to increase to allow users with severe clinical needs to carry necessary equipment.

➤ **How do we publicise DfT's public transport access database?**

The local arrangements for taking mobility scooters on trains, buses and trams vary and there are a number of issues involved including use of ramps for loading and unloading at stations, door width, aisle width, and scooter size and manoeuvrability.

Smaller scooters are generally allowed on public transport but there are some issues over stability when using ramps, particularly where the user is carrying additional items such as luggage, shopping, etc.

➤ **What are the wider implications of a growing market?**

➤ **How important are mobility scooters for leading independent lives?**

There is limited information available on why people purchase mobility vehicles, what the vehicles are used for, how frequently they are used, problems in using them, etc. and there will need to be further research into this. The underlying question is how important are mobility vehicles in supporting individuals to lead independent lives?

A copy of Nigel's presentation is attached with these notes.

**Update on recent developments in DWP portfolio
Steve Webb Minister for Pensions (cleared briefing teams)**

The Minister thanked the East Midlands Later Life Forum for providing a copy of their Ageing Positively Conference report and added that he looked forward to reading it.

The Minister reminded members that the Pensions Bill would be coming into Commons Public Bill Committee this month. The new State Pension will be a flat rate, but this is being introduced with a complicated pensions history behind it; many people will have been paying lower rate contracted-out National Insurance contributions and, in the interests of fairness, there will be a one-off deduction applied to the future State Pension of these people (as is consistent with what we do in the current system).

Everyone will build up State Pension in their own right. The removal of the provisions which allow people to receive a pension based on their spouse's or civil partner's NI record may mean that about 5% of people could receive less state pension. However, women who elected to pay the Married Woman's Reduced Rate National Insurance contribution will be protected and will receive roughly the same as what they could have received if the current system continued.

For those currently receiving a State Pension the Triple Lock means that the pension rate is now at the highest percentage of average earnings that it has been for the past 20 years.

The Minister added that during May the Government had said they would be banning consultancy charges on workplace pensions, and would be consulting in the Autumn on capping pension charges

The Minister then referred to the Age UK Global Impact of Ageing report and the evidence that the older old in the UK are more likely to be living in institutions than those elsewhere, and asked are there older people who fall through the cracks? The Minister asked members to discuss how we might set about identifying these older people; how we might encourage more local leadership around this question; and to let him know of any activity in their locality to find and support people like this.

The Minister spent some time with the different table discussions, thanked members for their contributions and added that he hoped to be able to come back in the future with some concrete ideas to develop with members. Discussions suggested that particularly vulnerable groups would include:

- those for whom English is not their first language;
- people with poor literacy skills;
- ex-servicemen;
- older people in prison, and ex-prisoners;
- people with mental health problems;

- people with learning or behavioural difficulties;
- individuals or couples with increasing debts.

Care & Support Update

Norman Lamb, Minister of State for Care & Support

The Minister of State for Care and Support opened by expressing his commitment and enthusiasm for an integrated approach to care and support and the importance of a mindset at national level for removing barriers. The Minister drew members attention to the publication, with national partners, in May of “Integrated Care and Support: Our Shared Commitment”, intended to support local areas in using existing structures for integrating care. A copy of the publication is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-care>, with further information available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-sure-health-and-social-care-services-work-together> and <http://www.england.nhs.uk/2013/05/14/c-care/>. The Minister also explained the plans for integration “pioneers”, where local areas can express an interest in becoming pioneers to demonstrate the use of ambitious and innovative approaches to delivering integrated care.

The Minister outlined approaches to integrated care that he had recently seen on a visit to Seattle, and to a hospital visit there where LEAN manufacturing techniques had been successfully used to improve standards of patient care. He then updated members on action to introduce hospital ratings, which will include the views of patients and their relatives, and the introduction of a Chief Inspector of Hospitals; further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/treating-patients-and-service-users-with-respect-dignity-and-compassion>.

The Minister also stressed his own commitment to appropriate standards of training for all care staff and his determination to see proper corporate responsibility in the care sector.

The Minister then moved into an open question and answer session with members which covered the following topics:

- With 70% of those eligible now holding personal budgets, the importance of making sure people have the information they need to inform their health and care choices, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-people-make-informed-choices-about-health-and-social-care/supporting-pages/giving-people-more-choice-and-control-in-health-and-social-care>.
- The report on the use and experience of the Liverpool Care Pathway; this report was published in July and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-liverpool-care-pathway-for-dying-patients>. The Government response is also available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norman-lamb-on-government-response-to-liverpool-care-pathway-review>.

- Opportunities for personal advance planning on end of life care, see: <http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment.aspx>.
- The arrangements for Health and Wellbeing Boards and the role of Healthwatch England, <http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/> refers.
- Highlighted the importance of early intervention and prevention in reducing the need for both hospital admissions and social care, see also <http://livinglonger.dh.gov.uk/>.

The importance of integrating housing support and home adaptation into care and discharge assessments, and the key role of leadership at all levels of the health service were also discussed.

Presentation on Phase 3 of The Strategy for Older People in Wales Andrea Nicolas Jones, Welsh Assembly Government

Andrea Nicholas-Jones gave the meeting an insight into Phase 3 of The Strategy for Older People in Wales. (The Strategy is available here: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/strategies/older/?lang=en>)

The vision underpinning the Strategy is for all older people in Wales to feel they are valued and supported, so the focus for all of our work in terms of health and social care and housing and other key policies in the Welsh Government is based on the concept of wellbeing. We are looking at wellbeing from 3 perspectives:

- social wellbeing;
- financial wellbeing; and
- environmental well-being.

Essentially saying: “I have somewhere to go, something to do; I have enough money to do what I want to do; and I live in a community that makes me feel I belong to it.”

The Strategy is a high level document and work is currently in progress across government and with key stakeholders and delivery partners to develop detailed action plans to bring this vision to reality.

A copy of Andrea’s presentation is attached with these notes.

Update on developments in the Fuel Poverty Programme Gareth Baynham-Hughes, (DECC) and Maria Wardrobe (NEA)

Gareth Baynham-Hughes gave the meeting an interesting presentation on understanding fuel poverty; the current measures in place to support those experiencing fuel poverty; the Independent Review of Fuel Poverty by Professor John Hills; and the proposed new definition of fuel poverty, including an explanation of the Low Income High Costs Indicator. A copy of the presentation is attached with these notes.

Gareth highlighted the positive contribution of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Warm Home Discount, and the offer of the Green Deal in supporting energy efficiency. The Hills Review has enabled an improved understanding of the underlying causes of fuel poverty and proposed a new definition based on that understanding. Put simply this means people will be fuel poor if they have low income and high fuel costs, this way of measuring means that it is possible to identify how badly people are affected, the fuel poverty gap, and to more effectively target resources to change that. Gareth also mentioned recent work to better understand the impacts of fuel poverty on health, and the Government response to the Hills Review.

The Government published *Fuel Poverty: a framework for future action* on 9 July 2013, this document and the analytical annex are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fuel-poverty-a-framework-for-future-action>

Maria Wardrobe, Director of National Energy Action, and Chair of the Age Action Alliance Safe Warm Homes working group talked to members about the, DECC funded, Warm Homes for Older People Project (WHFOP). A copy of Maria's presentation with supplementary information from WHFOP research is attached with these notes.

WHFOP using the extensive reach of the English Forums on Ageing provided awareness raising sessions across England supporting older people to understand the causes and impacts of fuel poverty and to access the support available; and equipping potential *advocates for warmer homes* to use their wider networks to spread information. The project also funded the development of a resource guide, which is regularly updated and is available to download free of charge here: <http://www.nea.org.uk/policy-and-research/publications/publications-2013/aaa-whfop-may13>

Maria also took the opportunity to announce that British Gas had agreed to fund a further programme of awareness sessions and updating of the guide.

Mervyn Kohler, Age UK, then introduced the issues for members to discuss, drawing their attention to the discussion paper included in the delegate pack, and attached as Annex A. Mervyn highlighted the four areas for discussion:

What to do to make houses more energy efficient; How to make sure the poorest people who need the money for fuel receive it; What can we do on energy bills; and What information and advice do we need. Mervyn also suggested some questions to provoke debate: Should the Winter Fuel Payment be restricted to re-direct resources to more targeted programmes? Could more be done to promote renewable energy sources with improved returns for the domestic consumer? Could the complexity of energy tariffs be reduced? The outcomes from the subsequent table discussions are attached as Annex B.

Responding to members questions Gareth advised that while he could only advise on schemes available in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all had schemes to tackle fuel poverty. Gareth also drew members' attention to the Energy Saving Advice Service telephone advice service which is available from 03001231234 (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Organisations/Government-and-local-programmes/Energy-Saving-Advice-Service>).

(Information is available for:

- Northern Ireland at: <http://www.warm-homes.com/>;
- Scotland at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/warmhomes/fuelpoverty>; and
- Wales at: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/energy/fuelpoverty/?lang=en>.)

Discussion and Feedback Session on Mobility Scooters Nigel Dotchin (DfT) and Caroline Jacobs (Rica)

Caroline Jacobs, Co-Director of Rica gave the meeting a short update on the recently published research report "The carriage of mobility scooters on public transport". A copy of the report is available from the RICA website (<http://www.rica.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pdfs/research-consultancy/dft-mobility-scooter-research-final-report-april-2013.pdf>).

Caroline further referenced RICA consumer information on public transport, mobility scooters and older drivers which is also available from the RICA website (<http://www.rica.org.uk/content/mobility>).

Members queried the role of the Motobility scheme in providing mobility scooters and Caroline explained that the Motobility scheme has a total of 11,000 scooters, so the number of people following this route is really very small; the mobility scooters market is predominantly a private one.

Additional concerns were raised by members regarding the storage of mobility scooters in supported and specialist housing, and buildings with multiple occupancy, where they may be a fire hazard, or cause obstruction. Housing providers have

reportedly raised the problem of trailing cables. These may be issues to consider with the Age Action Alliance Safe Warm Homes group.

Obstacles in the built environment, e.g. litter bins, signs, trees, can be more of an issue to mobility scooter users; and while there is guidance on street works to ensure that wheelchairs have access, scooters can be larger than wheelchairs and less manoeuvrable.

Nigel then reminded members of the questions he had raised earlier in the day and lead a plenary discussion with members which is summarised below:

➤ **How do we ensure proper assessments (including eyesight testing)?**

- Work with organisations like the Optical Confederation to provide a programme of testing that could also detect other health problems, to encourage take up.
- Work with suppliers to develop self-regulation/code of practice that includes a more rigorous approach to general assessment; appropriate user advice; capability, including eyesight, testing; links with local training schemes and after sales service.
- Capability testing could be controlled through the DVLA for Class 3 vehicles.

➤ **How do we promote the take up of more training?**

- Work with local authorities, local police and ambulance services, users, etc. to develop national training standards underpinned by a basic “safe to drive” test for users.
- Support the promotion of local schemes to deliver training and testing. Again for Class 3 users this could be controlled through the DVLA.
- This could also fulfil the preference of some public transport providers for a user permit recognising competence.
- Users involved in an accident, however minor, should be referred to a training provider.

➤ **How do we promote take up of insurance cover?**

- Work with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) to encourage the growth of low cost insurance available through specialist providers; promotion might highlight the potential risks in a litigious society for uninsured users.
- Fleet vehicles, e.g. supermarkets, hire companies, leisure venues, etc., should be required to have relevant insurance and to make this clear and explicit to users.
- Insurance could be included in the purchase price of new vehicles to encourage subsequent renewal.

➤ **How do we get DfT’s Guidance out to a wider audience?**

➤ **How do we publicise DfT’s public transport access database?**

- Promote the availability of DfT and other guidance through relevant newsletters and magazines, e.g. Saga.
- Target family members and carers of people with disabilities, and older people as they are likely to be involved in any decision to purchase a mobility scooter.
- DfT Minister could write an article for publication in AGEnda.

- Role for the Age Action Alliance Transport working group to get involved in promoting.
- **How do we tackle the second hand market?**
 - Introduce a licensing/registration system, with all scooters equipped with a unique identification number.
 - Introduce a roadworthiness test and certificate. This could be voluntary but promoted as a way for purchasers to ensure they were buying a safe working vehicle to encourage take up.
- **How do we improve the safety design of mobility vehicles?**
 - Work with the industry and different groups of users, and others, e.g. public transport providers, local authorities, etc., to develop mobility scooters that are better suited to the needs of users and the environments they are used in.
 - Fit all scooters with an audible whirring sound, or a proximity sensor alarm, to alert other road, and particularly, pavement users.
 - Review the size/weight limits and maximum speed, with a view to reducing these, especially of Class 2 vehicles. (Note: While recent RICA research has focused on controls it is likely there will be research on stability in the future.)
 - Scooters should be fitted with a clear simple emergency stopping mechanism.
- **What are the wider implications of a growing market?**
 - The increasing numbers of mobility scooters coming into use means that all the issues and concerns already identified will increase.
 - Unless there is a fair degree of self-regulation across the sector it is likely there will be an increase in the number of serious injuries and fatalities recorded.
 - Self-regulation/Regulation needs to include purchase, assessment, training and upkeep.
 - Housing providers will need to consider increasing mobility scooter ownership in the design and build of residential accommodation in both the private and social/public housing sectors.
- **How important are mobility scooters for leading independent lives?**
 - For many individuals mobility scooters are, or will become, essential to their independence but only if a proper level of training, safeguarding and support is easily available.

See also Annex C

Close & Future Meetings
Anrew Latto, DWP

Andrew thanked all the day's speakers for their time and commitment; and thanked members for their lively contributions. Members were also reminded to complete their meeting feedback forms, and to leave their name badges for next time.

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 25 September 2013**; and will be held at EEF Broadway House Conference Centre, Broadway House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NQ. The meeting will start at 10.45, with refreshments available from 10.30. Ministers will not be attending this meeting.

The venue will be: the Council Chamber, EEF Broadway House Conference Centre, Broadway House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NQ
(<http://www.eefvenues.co.uk/conference-venues/london/location.aspx>)

The final UK Advisory Forum on Ageing meeting for 2013 will be:
- **Tuesday 26 November 2013.**

Dates for meetings in 2014 will be advised in due course.

Annex A

A new fuel poverty strategy

Background.

The current fuel poverty strategy was written in 2001, following a Parliamentary vote on a Private Members Bill which resulted in the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act. It committed the Government to the eradication of fuel poverty amongst vulnerable households by 2010, and amongst all households by 2016. Fuel poverty was defined as needing to spend more than 10% of the household income on energy in order to keep adequately warm, and for the first few years the numbers were gently falling. But as energy prices began their irresistible upward rise in 2004/05, so did the numbers of households in fuel poverty.

The strategy evolved over the years, and drove action on three fronts.

- To address the energy efficiency of houses, till 2012, there was a state funded scheme (Warm Front) targeted at low income households and providing grants for a range of energy efficiency measures, and an energy company funded scheme (Carbon Emissions Reduction Target) which aimed to reduce energy consumption more generally, mainly through the provision of loft and cavity wall insulation. Both have now closed and have been replaced with the Green Deal, which includes free energy improvements for eligible low-income households funded by the Energy Company Obligation.
- To boost householders' incomes, there is the Winter Fuel Payment available to all pensioner households, and Cold Weather Payments made to eligible low income households when the temperature falls (or is forecast to fall) to zero for seven consecutive days.
- To drive down the cost of energy, there have been a variety of approaches to encourage switching suppliers, improve the transparency of customer bills, and to promote special tariffs and other company support programmes. The current flagship is the Warm Home Discount Scheme, which is automatically applied to the electricity bill of every pensioner household in receipt of Pension Credit*, and which this winter was worth £130.

What is happening now?

The latest official figures, for 2011, defined 4.5m households in fuel poverty, though unofficial estimates for today are pointing upwards of 6m (half of them pensioners). The Government appointed an independent review of the fuel poverty definition in 2011, with a view to better targeting these households. Professor John Hills reported in 2012, and a consultation was launched about adopting his proposal in which the Government promised a new fuel poverty strategy based on the findings of his report. The results (and Government decision) from that consultation are due to be announced 'shortly', and a new fuel poverty strategy is promised to be launched in the autumn.

What should the new fuel poverty strategy look like? What should be prioritised?

Are the three action points still relevant?

- Action on energy inefficient houses.

- Action to boost poor householders' incomes.
- Action to reduce the cost of energy bills.

1) Can help to improve energy efficiency be better targeted?

- The Green Deal is designed to help everyone - the universal, non-targeted programme: an offer to improve heating systems at no upfront cost (the cost is repaid through the energy savings realised by the improvement).
- The Energy Company Obligation is designed to help people on low incomes or in hard-to-treat homes (e.g. solid wall).
- Options to explore other priorities:
 - Low income households
 - Disabled householders
 - Households in solid wall housing
 - Households off the gas mains grid.
- Should the Winter Fuel Payment be restricted (raise the age threshold, tax it, eliminate higher rate tax-payers) to release funds for other fuel poverty work?
- Is the help adequate to support households who face consequential issues (clearing lofts to install insulation, needing new gas pipe work to support a condensing boiler)?
- Can more be done to promote solar and other forms of renewable energy?

2) Can more be done to improve incomes?

- Index the Winter Fuel Payment to energy prices
- Extend WFP to other groups of low income households
- Change the eligibility criteria for the Cold Weather Payments.

3) Can more be done to act on energy prices?

- Increase the transparency of energy bills
- Make switching energy supplier easier
- Reduce the complexity of energy tariffs
- Regulate the domestic heating oil sector
- Improve the Warm Home Discount Scheme
- Remove the social and environmental obligations on energy suppliers, which currently comprise about 5% of gas bills and 10% of electricity bills and which fund the ECO and WHD.

4) Information and advice

- Is it clear enough where to get advice on energy efficiency improvements and reducing bills?
 - Will smart meters make a difference to the energy awareness of older householders?
- The £130 discount for 12/13 goes to all those in receipt of pension credit guarantee credit and those 80+ who get both the guarantee and savings credit. Around 2 million households will receive assistance each year through the Warm Home Discount scheme. Over 1 million of the poorest pensioners received a discount of £130 off their energy bill in winter 2012/13

Annex B

Developments in the Fuel Poverty programme - Comments from table discussions

- Data sharing – WHD is a step in the right direction, however agencies working together to share understanding, if not data, would help identify the more vulnerable. DH/DWP/Councils hold data – surely this can be used for the benefit of the individual. Link also with Cold Weather Plan to identify vulnerable people.
- Identification of WHD should trigger automatically if not offer/prompt the lowest social tariff to the consumer
- Real concern that we have spectacularly failed to have a grown-up conversation with householders about the big picture issues in the energy and energy-efficiency arena resulting in a general lack of trust. Offers of free or cost effective home or appliance improvements were never the whole story – there was always a complication or snag which ended up costing more. Need to repair trust by introducing more trusted opinion formers to deliver an honest message which will command more attention.
- Much unhappiness with the perceived commercial honesty of the energy sector, with their attitude to price increases being described as cavalier. Ofgem seems to be struggling to control the sector.
- Potential of working with education providers to ensure fuel efficiency is taught from an early age.
- Real lack of understanding about renewables (and the introduction of a feed-in tariff for solar panels followed by a sharp cut in the tariff hasn't helped). People would be wary about adopting ideas promising a renewable heat incentive.
- The Winter Fuel Payment is far too important to be tinkered with ... wealthy pensioners can always give the money away.
- There needs to be a single strong credible brand for whoever is providing energy advice so that people have trust and confidence in it.
- Energy suppliers required to promote energy efficiency measures/help/schemes on their fuel bills.
- People are fed-up with, and distrustful of industry cold-calling, both to sell energy and with energy efficient offers. Should look at other options for encouraging take-up, e.g. through charities or other voluntary sector partners, peer to peer information, health service partnerships, Fire & Rescue services and other statutory bodies, using expert money saving websites, making information more widely know so that families can help.
- At the beginning of the fuel poverty session we were told that there is “A statutory obligation to eradicate fuel poverty as far as reasonably practicable by 2016. This is a contradiction. Could not help thinking that this rather took the heart out of all the good intentions of the rest of the presentation.
- Overall, the present market-led approach to energy saving policies is viewed as opening up far too many opportunities for consumer harm.
- Training older people as energy efficiency champions is a big step in the right direction.
- People in Park Homes were excluded from earlier warm front schemes. This cannot be allowed to continue through Green Deal/ECO. Many vulnerable Older

People live in this type of accommodation and are excluded from much needed support.

- New Build – All new properties must be built to the highest standard of energy efficiency
- People off the gas mains. There are examples of good practice with co-operatives buying oil in bulk. These need to be highlighted, shared and encouraged. Who is doing this?
- The domestic heating oil industry needs serious attention.
- Switching fuel suppliers needs to be made easier, particularly for those older people who do not have access to Internet.
- The Financial industry is regulated for money advice. Fuel companies or whoever is giving advice on best options need to be controlled similarly.
- How about reducing VAT on fuel?
- Ensure safety consideration is taken into account so that we deter people from using paraffin/portable heaters.
- Many older people, and other vulnerable groups, find it difficult to understand the various initiatives available.
- The trigger for Cold Weather Payments should be higher (e.g. 5, or at least 2, degrees rather than zero), to reflect the negative impacts on health of colder temperatures.
- There is too much information, and it is often quite complicated - surely this could be simplified and made more accessible to “ordinary” people.
- Local authorities should be required to establish, or at least consult on, an oil buying syndicate.
- All localities should have and publicise different locations where older people can go to not only save on their heating costs but also to meet people, and be engaged in activity.

Annex C

Mobility scooters : A case study

Dr. Mary Laurenson, Vice Chair of Future Years, Yorkshire and Humber Forum on Ageing, was run over by a motorised scooter and has never walked again.

The scooter ran her down on a pavement when the shopping bag on the scooter's handle bars slipped to press the accelerator forward. The scooter did not stop and when she fell forward the scooter continued to drive on over her.

There are no statutory regulations governing the purchase and driving of a motorised scooter. Consideration should be given to introducing the following:

- An assessment of the purchaser's fitness to drive.
- If purchased through the NHS, an assessment of the person is carried out.
- An eye sight test should be given.
- A test should be given regarding the competency to drive.
- Many motorised scooters are soundless – they can be bought with a whirring noise which does alert pedestrians. A small hooter/horn is often fixed but users may be afraid to use them in case it makes a person jump, e.g. into the road.
- Some training should be given on how to drive a scooter. Again depends where and through which organisation they are purchased; NHS will train.
- An identification number should be on each scooter so that if there's an accident it can be identified.
- Some change in the law regarding the classification of scooters may be needed. There are two classifications according to maximum speed. Higher speed scooters can be used on the road, lower speeds say 4/5 mph on pavements. Scooters on the road do have a tax disk which is free. Should these be subject to highway regulations enforceable by the Police?
- Anyone can buy a scooter whether disabled and unable to walk or not and can drive on the road, e.g. to the pub. Should there be breath tests? How could scooters bought by non-disabled people be regulated? Should they be? If used on the road there should be some restrictions. (Not a good idea to restrict them to cycle lanes)
- Shopping centres which hire out motorised scooters should have some cover for liability.
- The disabled owner of a motorised scooter may have household insurance cover for theft and damage only.
- Some country estates hire out scooters for their visitors.
- Manufacturers should contribute to greater safety rather than overburdening the user with costly regulation.
- Include the fitting of an audible whirring sound and/or fitting of proximity sensors.
- Fit with the technology to stop the scooter in an emergency.
- Reduction in size/weight and maximum speed should be considered.